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Three quarters of employee requests for flexible work arrangements are approved

More than half a million (503,900) Victorian employees and persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, requested a change to their work arrangements in the twelve months to December 2010, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Three quarters (75%) of all requests were approved.

Of those employees and people on long-term leave who made a request for changes to work arrangements, more family time and financial reasons (both 16%) were the most commonly reported main reasons for making the request, followed by leisure or travel, and child care needs (both 11%).

Over half (58%) of those who indicated child care needs as the main reason for their most recent request, asked for flexibility in works hours or work location. A third (33%) requested reduced hours or leave.

Those who reported a lack of work-life balance were more likely to have requested a change to work arrangements. In the 12 months to December 2010, over a third (35%) of the 232,600 people whose work and personal lives were rarely or never balanced, requested a change to current work arrangements. Less than a fifth (19%) of the 963,700 people whose lives were always balanced requested such a change.

Of the 1.66 million people who did not request a change to work arrangements, 1.3 million (76%) indicated they were content with their current work arrangements, while 392,800 (24%) gave other reasons for not requesting a change. Of the 392,800 people who gave other reasons, 24% said their job wasn't suitable or doesn't allow for changes. Another 14% had just started their job, 14% said they had too much work or were too busy and 10% were not sure that their employer would allow the change.

Further details can be found in *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, Victoria, Dec 2010* (cat. no. 6210.2).

Media notes:

- When reporting ABS data the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the source.
- Victorians refers to those persons who were in the scope of the survey. Please see the Conceptual Framework in the Explanatory Notes.
- People on long-term leave refers to persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave.
- Work-life balance refers to the balance between work and family or social commitments.

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